



Addiction Awareness Activity: *Priority Planning Board*

• **Length:** 40 minutes

• **Set-up:** chairs in circle

• **Type:** Large group

Trainer Script:

In this activity we're going to think about our priorities in the field of addiction prevention and treatment and make a Priority Planning Board.

Instructions:

Hand out 2 pieces of paper and a pencil or pen to each person.

Directions for Making a Priority Planning Board:

[Skip this step if using pre-made Planning Board and cards.]

A. Tear one of your pieces of paper into 12 equal pieces.

- Fold the paper in half lengthwise (11 inch)
- Fold it in half again lengthwise
- Open the paper up
- Now fold it in thirds widthwise ($8\frac{1}{2}$ inch)

It can be done anyway you choose. If you happen to end up with more than 12 pieces, that's ok—just put the extra pieces in your pocket!

B. Now take your second piece of paper and draw 12 sections on it. It should look something like this:

1	2	3
4	5	6
7	8	9
10	11	12

Materials needed:

- Pencils or pens for each participant
- 2 sheets of paper for each participant

- Demonstrate.

- Show example of a numbered grid.

C. Number these sections from 1 to 12. This is your Priority Planning Board.

D. Place your numbered board on the floor in front of you.

E. On the 12 torn sections of paper, please write the ending of the 12 statements written on the flip chart. Each statement begins with

"How important is it to YOU that . . ."

Note: Allow time for participants to write the *endings* of the Priority Planning Board Statements on their 12 torn slips of paper. The 12 statements should be written on a flip chart for participants to refer to.

The 12 Priority Planning Board Statements are:

How important is it to you that . . .

1. . . . People have opportunities for Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) education.
2. . . . Your organization confronts the problem of AOD abuse.
3. . . . People consider alcohol a drug.
4. . . . Adults do not get drunk.
5. . . . People do not use illegal drugs.
6. . . . Chemical dependency is considered an illness.
7. . . . Dependent people have opportunities for treatment.



- On the flip chart, write the sentence stem: "How important is it to YOU that . . ."

- Write the **endings** on the flip chart as the participants are writing them on their slips of paper. This will help with timing.

8. . . . *There are stricter legal consequences for alcohol and other drug offenses.*
9. . . . *Family members are role models for each other in their use of alcohol and other drugs.*
10. . . . *People realize this is a long-term effort with no quick fixes.*
11. . . . *Alcohol and other drug policies at home, work, church, school, and in the community all reflect the same attitudes.*
12. . . . *Wild Card!! You may write the ending of your choice—something that is important to you and has not yet been said. Examples could be ". . . That pregnant women not drink or use illegal drugs" or ". . . That people understand that treatment works."*

F. Once you have written the ending of one statement on each of your 12 pieces of paper, the next step will be to prioritize your statements. I will allow time for you to do this.

- Wait until everyone has written their statements before proceeding.

Prioritizing the Statements

Place your pieces of paper on your Priority Planning Board where you think each should be. Square #1 represents what is most important to you and Square #12 represents what is least important to you. They may all be important, but our task now is to prioritize.

In this exercise **there are no right or wrong answers**. Based on our individual experiences we may have different views about priorities. It's your life experience that makes a statement your top priority or the least important.

You may move or adjust your squares of paper to new positions until I call "Time!" You have 5 minutes.

Let's discuss your priorities. When you respond to these statements, say "**I think** _____, " rather than "I agree with _____" or "I disagree with _____."

- Ask participants to share their #1 priority.
- Ask participants to share their #12 priority. Remind them that just because they ranked this statement last doesn't mean it isn't important.
- Ask participants to share what they used for a Wild Card and where they placed it on their board.

Next, please remove 6 cards from your board so that you are left with your top 6 priorities.

What was the thought process you went through to:

- Select your top 6 priorities?
- Eliminate the last 6?

Now, please take 3 more cards off your board. This will leave you with your top 3 priorities. Anything goes:

- You can make a new Wild Card.
- You can bring back something you have already taken off.



- Give participants 5 minutes to prioritize their statements.
- After 5 minutes, call "Time!"



- Give participants 2-3 minutes to remove six cards.
- After 2-3 minutes, call "Time!"
- Ask participants to share with the large group.



- Give participants 2-3

- Rearrange as you wish.

Let's go around the circle and have everyone share only their #1 priority—without an explanation.

Our priorities are formed from our family relationships and culture, past experiences and history, and our education and training. Since our experiences of these are all different, it makes sense that we would not have the same perspectives or priorities. In the field of addiction prevention and treatment, it is no different—we all see the problems differently and have varying priorities. Doing exercises like this one we just completed reminds us of this.

Thank you all for sharing!

Now to clean up: take all torn squares and place them inside your planning boards. Now fold your boards and toss them into the wastebasket.

minutes to remove three cards.

- After 2-3 minutes, call "Time!"
- Ask participants to share with the large group.
- Closure.

- Pass the wastebasket around the circle.

Taken from Hayton, R., Cormack, S., Baehni, S., & Pilot, M. (2002). *Foundations of Substance Use, Abuse, and Dependence*. Kansas City, MO: Mid-America Addiction Technology Transfer Center.